

Buffington To Keynote 'Y' Parley

SEP 27 1962
Dr. Reed L. Buffington, president of Chabot College, will be the keynote speaker at tomorrow night's session of the Pacific Southwest Area YMCA Association of Secretaries Triennial conference at Yosemite National Park. His topic will be "The Looking Glass Talks Back."

More than 100 YMCA secretaries from throughout the southwestern U.S. will attend the four day meeting.

Dr. Buffington was a member of the Mt. Diablo YMCA for seven years, serving as its president, vice president and treasurer. He currently is a member of the Oakland YMCA's Metropolitan Board.

Other speakers include Dr. Fred B. Trevitt, pastor of the High Street Presbyterian Church in Oakland, and Harold A. Wagner, general manager and general secretary of the Los Angeles YMCA.

Buffington To Head Survey

MAR 8 1964
Dr. Reed L. Buffington, president of Chabot College, will be chairman of an accreditation team which will visit Sierra College at Rocklin tomorrow through Wednesday.

The team, representing the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, will make its visit in connection with Sierra's application for renewal of its accreditation. Sierra was accredited for a five year period in 1959.

The team will write a report based on its observations and interviews with administrators, faculty and students at Sierra. The report then will be submitted to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the regional accrediting association which also reviews the programs and standards of four year colleges and universities in California.

He Changed His Point Of View

By DOROTHY CUTHBERTSON

The man who once thought so little of junior colleges that he wouldn't even bother checking into a proffered junior college scholarship is now the president of Chabot College.

And to further illustrate that a man can learn and change his mind about a lot of things, Dr. Reed Buffington figures that, had he been told as a boy that he'd one day be a college president, "I'd have held out for being a bus driver."

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GREYHOUND'S loss was education's gain, inasmuch as Buffington is now so enthusiastically engrossed in the present and future role of junior colleges that it's a bit difficult to divert him from that subject to more personal ones, such as the fact that he's an alumnus of an institution with the catchy name of Thorton Fractional Township High School, which is in Calumet City, Ill.

It was on the occasion of that

graduation that Buffington was offered several scholarships, including one to a nearby junior college which charged tuition. The latter was the only one he didn't check out.

It was also at Thorton Fractional that he met his wife, Elaine. Both were sophomores at the time. Romance was abetted because he played trumpet in the school band, she played clarinet, and the band's seating arrangement was such that they sat opposite each other.

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ANOTHER MAN'S courtship — but not Buffington's — might have been complicated by the fact that Mrs. Buffington has an identical twin, Aldine (who subsequently married Buffington's brother, Chester).

"You couldn't tell them apart," Buffington said, firmly emphasizing the pronoun, "but I could. I never made a mistake. She always looked different to me."

The wedding came in June 1942, immediately after both had graduated from college. Buffington, holding a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Chicago, went off to a four-year stint in military service intending to return to a civilian life career in public administration or constitutional law. The switch to the field of education was, at the outset, a matter of being practical.

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COMING OUT OF the service in 1946 Buffington, with a wife and a child to support and another on its way, took a good look at salaries paid in public administration and decided "we couldn't make a go of it."

He returned to the University of Chicago, received his master's degree a year later (his doctorate in educational administration came from Stanford University in 1954), then went to work as an instructor and administrative assistant at

the city-operated Wright Junior College in Chicago.

Buffington hasn't been out of the junior college business since (after leaving Wright and before coming to Hayward in 1961, he was dean of instruction and then president of Diablo Valley College in Concord and assistant superintendent of the Contra Costa Junior College District).

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"THE JUNIOR college is what is adding new zest to higher education," Buffington said.

And as for Chabot College and the South County Junior College District, "We're trying to be bold — creative — experimental, but not at the expense of the students. We don't go into anything where the student may suffer the consequence."

"Fortunately, we have a board which insists on finding new ways to do things." Smiling, Buffington explained that shortly before he came to the

district, one of the trustees summed up board purpose as an effort "to keep the molasses from getting thick." Ever since, when considering policies and programs, trustees have frequently raised as a standard of measurement: "Is the molasses getting thick?"

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WHAT DOES Buffington do for relaxation?

Buffington, who displays absolutely no sign of tension, appeared startled by the question.

"For the past six years I've done little but work at Chabot," he replied, his tone making it clear that few other pursuits could seem as interesting or "relaxing."

The Buffingtons are still devoted to music, he acknowledged, but more as patrons than as performers, although Mrs. Buffington plays the piano "in the privacy of the family circle (which now frequently includes Buffington's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Howell



"MOLASSES THICK?"



"YOU LOSE YOUR LIP"



"... AN OUTWARD SYMBOL"

Buffington, 1252 Walpert St., who moved to Hayward three years ago." The trumpet is gathering dust.

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WITH LACK of practice "you lose your lip," Buffington grinned.

He's also such an ardent golfer that once, within the past 10 months, he abandoned his office at Chabot to play a round ("I'm a much better president than a golfer, which probably says nothing about either").

The May 7 formal dedication of the Chabot campus will be a proud moment, Buffington admitted.

"But," he added earnestly, "I'm much more proud of the educational program, which is invisible . . . the buildings are an outward symbol of this excellence."

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BUFFINGTON pointed out that his son, Alan, 21 (now Spec. 4 Buffington stationed at Fort Gordon, Ga.) graduated from Chabot; daughter Laurie,

19, will graduate this year, and another daughter, Gail, 18, will enroll at Chabot in the fall.

"I wouldn't permit them to come here if I didn't honestly believe they'd have the best educational opportunities," Buffington said. "I'm more proud of that than anything else."

The only holdout among the Buffington young is Alison who, being 5½, is temporarily ignoring Chabot in favor of getting a few other things, like kindergarten, out of the way first.

Buffington May Get Pay Increase

A salary increase for Dr. Reed Buffington, district superintendent, will probably be considered tonight by South County Junior College District trustees as they consider a recommendation that Buffington's contract be renewed.

Although the recommendation makes no reference to salary increase, a boost in pay has previously gone along with renewal of contract.

Dr. Buffington has headed the district since it was established in 1961. His four-year contract expires June 30. The new contract, if approved by the board at its 7:30 p.m. meeting would continue to June 30, 1972.

The meeting will be held in the board room, Building 200, Chabot College.

Buffington Opposes Uniformity

APR 25 1968

By DON BUCHHOLZ

Chabot College President Dr. Reed L. Buffington has strongly criticized a report by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Higher Education suggesting the university, college and junior college systems be placed under single administration.

"There is no excuse for this kind of idiocy," Buffington declared. "The strength of higher education lies in its diversity, and all this (the report's recommendation) does is to uniformly bring everything down to the level of mediocrity, not to mention give the bureaucrats another foothold."

Buffington asked, "Do you think universities like Yale or Harvard could offer what they do under such a system? Different schools have different emphases — one college might offer a great program in mining engineering, for example, but that doesn't mean that all colleges should."

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BUFFINGTON AND South County Junior College District trustees have expressed concern over possible loss of local control of junior colleges. Their concern was sparked by the appointment of a 15-man junior college board of governors, which assumes power July 1 although its specific functions will not be designated until January.

"If the state is allowed to assume this kind of control over

Buffington Opposes Uniformity

(Continued From Page 1)

higher education, everybody's going to suffer," Buffington said.

The legislative committee, headed by Assembly Speaker Jesse Unruh, includes Assemblymen Carlos Bee, D-Hayward, and Robert Monagan, R-Tracy. It reported that "barriers" between the university, state colleges and junior colleges in their competition for money, faculty, students and facilities may require abandonment of the present structure.

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ONE WAY OF doing this, according to the report, is to organize the statewide system on a regional basis, with a close planning and operating relationship between the university centers, state colleges and junior colleges in each region.

The regional plan would establish from three to six districts in the state, each composed of one or more university centers, several liberal arts colleges and a cluster of supporting junior colleges.

"In many cases, the existing (University of California) campuses would serve as the new university centers," the committee stated. "But several of the larger state colleges, such as San Francisco, San Jose and San Diego state colleges, might also be converted to this function."

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THE STATE COLLEGES, under this plan, would become essentially undergraduate teaching institutions, as would some of the recently established small U.C. campuses, the report said.

The junior colleges "would no longer be entirely autonomous institutions in relation to the other elements of public higher education," the committee stated, "but brought in to serve and be served by the liberal arts colleges and university centers in their regions."

The "tripartite" system established by the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education was "at best only temporarily successful," according to the committee, "but the Master Plan and resulting legislation did little to alter the basic fact that California has four separate but parallel systems of higher education (including private colleges) which are only very

loosely united in a common purpose."

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THE REPORT SAID that while some competition among the different types of colleges may be beneficial, "in our judgment it has now reached the point at which it threatens not only to cost the taxpayers excessively but also to deprive many students of reasonably equal educational opportunities."

The committee cited the most

pressing problem in California higher education as "the drive by the state college system to achieve university status."

"Eventually, the state colleges would become, if the money were available, a second university system . . . The cost would be enormous, and this cost could only be borne either by placing a greater burden upon state taxpayers or by withholding funds otherwise available for the university or junior colleges," the report said.

APR 25 1968

Reed Buffington back on the job

HAYWARD — Chabot College Superintendent-President Reed Buffington is back on the job, after recuperation from a heart attack. MAR 27 1970

Buffington suffered a mild attack Jan. 18, and was hospitalized for a time after that.

Buffington is back to work on a limited basis.

Chabot president on state board

HAYWARD — Dr. Reed L. Buffington, Chabot College president and superintendent of the South County Junior College District, has been elected vice president of the seven-man executive committee of the California Junior College Association.

Buffington was one of the

seven new officers selected by the CJCA board of directors to serve one-year terms. His term began July 1.

The Chabot president was serving as vice chairman of the Junior College Accrediting Committee for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Buffington elected board chief

MAY 23 1973

Personal
HAYWARD — Dr. Reed Buffington, superintendent of the South County Junior College District and president of Chabot College in Hayward, has been elected president of the California Junior College Association for the academic year beginning July 1.

Buffington, who has been Chabot's chief executive officer since its formation in 1961, was elected during the association's board of directors meeting in Sacramento. He succeeds Mrs. Mary Lou Zoglin, a trustee of the Foothill Community College District in Los Altos Hills.

As association president,

Buffington will head an organization that represents all of California's 95 public community colleges and three private two-year institutions. Combined, the California community colleges offer programs to nearly 900,000 day and night students.

Prior to coming to Chabot College 12 years ago, Buffington had served as president of Diablo Valley College at Pleasant Hill and was assistant superintendent of the Contra Costa Junior College District. The former community college instructor and dean of instruction received his doctorate in education from Stanford University.

keynote speaker at church dinner

SEP 24 1973

By RITA RESARE

HAYWARD — By law and in practice there is a separation of church and state, but both are striving toward the same goals in some cases and are united in service to God and man.

This was one of the observations made by Dr. Reed Buffington, president of Chabot College, when he spoke at the 15th anniversary dinner of Messiah Lutheran Church Saturday evening. The college and the church are across-the-street neighbors, and Dr. Buffington's talk was entitled "Neighbors In Service."

He observed that he was somewhat dismayed when the Rev. Jack Lewis asked him to be the speaker. He first felt that a person involved in religious matters might be more appropriate as a speaker.

But Buffington said he decided that the church and the school, which is an agency of the state, are actually interdependent. And both are striving to better the lives of people and to bring dignity to the individual.

Buffington said Messiah and Chabot "grew up together" and shared some common problems, among them the dilemma of providing parking facilities. He jokingly observed that Chabot offers classes six days a week, but won't infringe on Messiah's right to all the parking spaces on Sunday.

In a more serious vein Buffington said that knowledge was preserved by the church during the Dark Ages. Priests were then the only educated persons, and the church recognized education as vital to its continued existence.

The Protestant Reformation recognized that education had to be expanded, Buffington said. The church then engaged in mass efforts toward literacy.

The Sunday school, even today, is as vital as worship to the life of the church, Buffington said. The great universities first established in the country were church affiliated.

In early California, Buffington noted, the only two educated persons in most communities were the school teacher and the pastor. They also shared the distinction of being the only residents barred from the local saloon.

Although church affiliated schools usually bring to mind the Catholics, Buffington said many other denominations have day schools, including the Lutherans. And he added that they generally provide excellent training.

The goals of the church and the school are similar in sev-

eral ways, Buffington said. Both put people first.

Both recognize that learning is valuable, he said, and is "crucial" if persons are to learn to live together in harmony. Communication and understanding are critical, he said, in our complex, impersonal society.

The church and the school both represent "lights shining in the darkness" to Buffington. Both are trying to work toward the elimination of man's inhumanity to man.

The light of knowledge, as it helps men to be better, can be compared to the light of God, Buffington said.

Chabot is making a great effort to recognize the individual, he observed, which is difficult in the computer age. The college wants to emphasize that the single student is more important than the system, he said.

Toward this end it has developed an independent study center which allows students to progress at their own rate, often without any contact with a faculty member. Emphasis has moved from theme writing to allowing a student to determine his own needs and abilities.

Faculty members are encouraged to work with small groups, exploring ideas outside the regular curriculum, according to Buffington.

One development has been a tutorial center, operated by volunteers. They have discovered the rewards of helping others, some in the college and some outside of it.

College students assist youngsters in elementary school, Buffington said, and donate their time to convalescent hospitals, recreation districts and the like. These services are for the "privilege of serving others" and afford the students "great joy and satisfaction," according to Buffington.

"Relevance" is a word applied to churches these days, and Chabot is trying to apply it also, Buffington said. The college attempts to offer new courses as community needs arise. These needs include medical technicians for ambulances and Spanish-speaking police officers.

New directions in society offer a challenge to the college, Buffington said, and one of these is a comparative religion course which has proven very popular. He added that Bible reading is popular with students, amounting to "a real revival."

He conducted that the church and the college might well quote the old hymn "Blest be the tie that binds."

Buffington named to board

Dr. Reed L. Buffington, president of Chabot College and superintendent of the South County Community College District, has been elected to the board of directors of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

The announcement of Buffington's election was made in Washington, D.C.

MAY 27 1976

Buffington, who was elected to a three-year term, has headed Chabot College since 1961. He is also a former president of Diablo Valley College, and has held other posts in the community college field.

He is a past chairman of the California Junior College Association, and is currently serving as chairman of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Colleges Association.

As a member of the 30-person board, Buffington will help set policy directions for the 56-year-old national organization. The association represents more than 900 institutions with nearly 4 million students.

Buffington gets salary increase **3/16/77**

HAYWARD — South County Community College District Supt. Reed L. Buffington received a new four-year contract last night that increases his salary from \$39,500 to \$46,000.

Buffington said the salary increase was a "trade-off," since the new contract provides that he must supply his own car and pay its expenses, and that he will no longer receive a \$1,000-per-year tax-free annuity.

In his previous contract, Buffington received the car and reimbursement for expenses, as well as the annuity.

The new contract goes into effect July 1 and runs through June 30, 1981. He signed his previous contract with the district in 1975, and that, too, was a four-year pact.

Buffington said the new contract has no provision for a salary adjustment, but is a "fixed four-year document."

JAN 22 1960

Chabot chief has heart attack

HAYWARD — Dr. Reed Buffington, president of Chabot College, was admitted to Kaiser Hospital Wednesday after a "very mild heart attack," according to his wife, Elaine.

Mrs. Buffington said the attack was so slight that it was only confirmed Friday that a coronary had indeed occurred.

Dr. Buffington was reported in satisfactory condition last night in the coronary care unit at Kaiser.

Mrs. Buffington said he is expected to be released within a week or 10 days.

Chabot president out of hospital

HAYWARD — Chabot College President Reed Buffington has been discharged from Kaiser Hospital, where he had been a patient since suffering a "very mild heart attack" Jan. 18.

According to his wife, Elaine Buffington, the attack was so slight it wasn't until Jan. 20 that doctors confirmed Buffington had suffered a coronary.

He was discharged Monday.

Chabot head's new pay OK'd

HAYWARD — A new contract, raising Chabot College Superintendent Reed Buffington's salary from \$46,000 to \$55,250 was approved by district trustees last night.

The new four-year pact replaces a similar contract signed by Buffington in 1977. Buffington's \$55,250 salary places him "somewhere in the middle," when his pay is compared with superintendents of other Bay Area college districts, according to Board President Lawrence Jarvis.

Approval of the contract was not unanimous — Trustee E.J. Chinn voted against it, apparently wrangled at the amount of the increase. He had suggested the amount be amended to \$51,929 per year, because that figure "follows the pattern of increases granted the faculty."

Other board members supported the higher figure, and Chinn's suggestion received no second.

Trustee Ann Duncan said the board examined a number of factors before reaching its decision, and "could defend," its proposed salary increase.

Chabot president announces retirement

MAR 4 1981

HAYWARD — Chabot College Superintendent Reed L. Buffington announced his retirement Tuesday night, effective in June.

Buffington, 60, has headed the South County Community College District for 20 years, since it was established in 1961. He supervises the school's campuses in Hayward and Livermore.

Buffington made his announcement during a closed session of Chabot trustees. Following the hour-long session, board president Margaret Rose Wiedman made the announcement.

Buffington said he was retiring to

"take a job in the private sector." He said he was "not at liberty" to say what the job was.

The Hayward resident currently earns \$55,250 for his post as president

● Ohlone president applies for New York job, Page 17.

and superintendent of the district.

A graduate of the University of Chicago and Stanford University, Buffington was dean of instruction and president of Diablo Valley College in Concord before coming to Chabot.



Reed L. Buffington

Private sector job nice change of pace

By Jolene D'Angelo
Staff writer

MAR 20 1983

Reed Buffington, superintendent of Chabot College for 20 years, says what he likes most about his new job with Lucky Stores is that he is out of the "fishbowl."

"As head of a public institution, I thought the press was entitled to know just about everything," said Buffington, who surprised the college with his retirement nearly two years ago.

"I felt like I represented Chabot College all the time. It's a relief to have my privacy back," he said.

"Sometimes I fool around with my '72 VW. If I need a part or something, I can go down in my oil-stained clothes and get it now — I couldn't do that then," he explained.

Sitting in his office at the corporate headquarters of Lucky's in Dublin, Buffington talked about some of the reasons he left Chabot.

"I don't want to sound like a coward, but let's just say I'm glad I don't have to deal with the problems resulting from the (depressed) financial state of the college," he said.

Buffington saw many of the problems coming and fought to head them off, but knew he was losing the battle. After 34 years in education, he decided it was time to get out.

"A community college can't thrive under the direction of a Sacramento bureaucracy. That destroys the genius of the community college — that of being responsive to the community," he said.

With the conviction and feeling only a true believer in the system could have, Buffington explained that people did not understand that when they voted for Proposition 13, they were taking the revenue away from Chabot. "And when they took away the revenue, they took away the independence."

"We were working under an irra-



Reed Buffington, former superintendent of Chabot College, now works in private industry.

tional system. We would be operating two months or more before the budget was ever approved."

He said he had been considering a career change for about a year before he took the job with Lucky's.

"I considered private consulting work, teaching at the graduate level. I even considered stepping down and becoming a faculty member," he said.

Now part of the corporate team of the seventh largest retailer in the country, Buffington says, "There is more opportunity for rational decisions, unfettered by the academic and state bureaucracies." That, for Buffington, makes his new job much more satisfying.

Chabot president will be honored

MAY 20 1981
HAYWARD — Retiring Chabot College President Reed L. Buffington and his wife, Elaine, will be honored at a reception June 11.

The reception will be held in Centennial Hall, 22292 Foothill Blvd., at 5 p.m.

Sponsors of the event are asking for a \$5-per-person donation from those attending. In addition, money is being collected for a Reed L. Buffington Endowment Fund.

The fund is being established to "recognize excellence among alumni, students and faculty" at the college.

Buffington, who has worked in education for more than 30 years, is Chabot's first and only president.



Staff photo

Saying goodbye

JUN 13 1981

Chabot College Superintendent Reed Buffington, left, gets a goodbye hug from former Hayward Fire Chief Matt Jiminez at a reception Thursday commemorating Buffington's retirement. Buffington is leaving Chabot after serving as superintendent for the past 20 years.

~~Chabot College~~ trustees honor Buffington, study lean budget

By Leslie R. Erickson
Staff writer

HAYWARD — After another affectionate goodbye to Reed Buffington, Chabot College trustees turned their attention to a lean tentative budget for the next fiscal year.

Despite a slim estimated 4.8 percent increase in state aid for Chabot, the board's general mood remained high as they honored the retiring superintendent with a plaque commending his 20 years of service to the school.

Buffington accepted the accolades Tuesday and then applauded as student trustee Paul Travers awarded plaques to trustees Arthur Van Etten and E.J. Chinn for their 20 years of service to Chabot.

In budget business, a reassessment of the state's general apportionment grant — which accounts for 80 percent of Chabot's revenues — was hastily prepared by business manager Walter S. Robie after the state budget went to the governor's desk Monday.

Board members were not surprised in this era of budget constraints that the general grant is likely to be increased only \$730,321 above the preliminary budget figure of \$16,832,118 put before the board in May.

Buffington told the board that the 4.8 percent increase above last year's grant, based on average daily attendance figures of 9,900 estimated for 1981-82, was "marginal." He said the board could expect further constraints in the next two years.

The superintendent also said any increase in revenues may have to be passed along to teachers and classified personnel as they negotiate new contracts this summer, thereby necessitating a dip into reserves of up to \$1 million to balance the budget. If the reserves are used for such a purpose, it will be the first time in the school's 20-year history, he said.

Buffington strongly advised the trustees not to cut projected instructional programs to avoid dipping into the reserves, citing past state government tendencies to withhold funds when budget reserves remain proportionately high, compared to expenditures.

In other business Tuesday, the trustees voted to continue funding a Washington lobbyist through the California Community Colleges Federal Affairs Council. Chabot's share for the year totals \$1,467.

The board appointed Richard D. Yeo, dean of instruction, as acting superintendent, effective on Buffington's retirement June 30. Yeo will remain in that position indefinitely at a salary increase of \$500 a month pending the appointment of a new superintendent.

And, before retiring to executive session to discuss personnel and collective bargaining issues, the trustees made public a proposal to maintain all existing salary levels, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment for the Chabot chapter of the California School Employees Association until and unless a new agreement is reached.

JUN 18 1981

Buffington gets post with Lucky Stores

DUBLIN — Chabot College Superintendent Reed L. Buffington has been named senior vice president-administration of Lucky Stores Inc., it was announced Thursday.

The 61-year-old community college administrator and Hayward resident will end his 20-year career at Chabot Tuesday.

Buffington, who was the college's first and only superintendent, an-

nounced in March he would be leaving to take a job in the private sector, but would not say what it was.

He served on the national food chain's board of directors since 1970.

An educator for 34 years, Buffington said he is leaving Chabot because the new offer is flattering and presents a new challenge for him.

His dream realiz

By Miriam Silver
Staff writer

Reed L. Buffington is strong and commanding. He stands tall, dresses impeccably and speaks directly.

He was a mere 41 years old two decades ago when the first trustees of Chabot College asked him to help them realize their dream of building a quality community college to serve residents in Southern Alameda County.

He was a tough son-of-a-gun in the early days, admits he still is "a bear about some things," and demands the very best from his staff, "insisting upon it."

But Buffington, 61, says he has tempered himself, become less caustic, learned to listen.

After 34 years in education, the last 20 at Chabot College, Buffington shook the hand of his last graduating senior Saturday and

'I'm somewhat tired of being a public official'

leaves Chabot Tuesday for a new job in private industry.

The Dublin-based Lucky Stores Inc. has hired him as senior vice president in charge of administration, at a salary he would not disclose but called attractive.

Discovering why Buffington is leaving the college, which he finds "very difficult to disassociate from," reveals his own dreams about education and himself.

He sat on Lucky's board of directors since 1970, and the job was offered to him a few months ago.

"It's very flattering to get a new career at 61," Buffington said. "And we all have to feed our egos."

He also feels that 34 years in education and 20 years at Chabot are enough. Buffington has accomplished things he is proud of; now he wants privacy.

"I'm frankly somewhat tired of being a public official, of working for the public. I'm tired of the fishbowl," he said.

Nevertheless, the superintendent — who is also the husband of 39 years to Elaine Buffington and the father of four children who attended Hayward schools and Chabot — has been able to maintain a somewhat private life.

"It's important to me to get out from underneath the automobile with grease on my face," he said. "I'm entitled to get my hands dirty."

Flattery and privacy, however, only fringe his most compelling

reason for leaving education.

"I have a concern for what's happening to the community college," Buffington said. "We're only two years away from becoming a state system. And I'm not sure I want to be part of that. Maybe I can do more from the outside."

What's happening to the traditional community college, in Buffington's view, is that the people who live in the area, have children there and pay taxes will soon have little to say and even less to do with their area college.

Local control of a school is crucial, and a combination of the unification of California schools, tax-cutting Proposition 13 and recent federal budget cuts has centralized education.

It started in the late 1950s in California, he said.

"When we unified the schools in California," Buffington said, "what we did was to build what would be educationally and fiscally a more efficient system. . . . What we really did was move the schools away from the people."

And then there was Proposition 13, the measure passed in 1978 that severely limited the amount of local property taxes a city or school district could collect. In pre-Proposition 13 days, Chabot got over 85 percent of its budget from local property taxes. Now, its budget is almost entirely supported by state money.

"When people voted for Proposition 13, they were voting to cut taxes, which I have sympathy for," Buffington said. "But they were also voting to transfer control to the state and federal government. That's the tragedy of Proposition 13 — not less money, but the tragedy is the loss of control."

It is a "very grim" situation in Buffington's view.

"I think it's going to change the whole nature of the institution," he said.

In 1961, when Chabot's first board of trustees dreamed of a stable, locally controlled, free community college, Buffington shared the vision.

"My effort was to build things into the fabric of the college that could not be removed easily by a new rule or something written on a piece of paper," he said.

"Institutions are effective when they have direction. It takes time to develop focus and direction. We have developed remarkable stability."

Buffington attributed Chabot's stability to the administrators, teachers and other staff members who have stayed at the college for years, helping to add innovation to

ed, Buffington leaves Chabot



Chabot Superintendent Reed Buffington kisses daughter, Alison, who was born three days after her father was offered the job as Chabot's chief executive, on June 23, 1961. Move over, Bo Derek — this is a day for Twenties.

Sal Bromberger — staff photos

a solid educational program — all offered free to anyone in the district who could benefit from it.

Tuition-free community colleges, he believes, are essential to a quality higher education system.

Without an "open-door" policy at Chabot and other community colleges throughout the state, the University of California could not have become what Buffington describes as "one of the premier institutions in the world."

The University of California can reject students, build high stan-

dards and develop specialties, he said.

Buffington says he sees the demise within two years of tuition-free community colleges, local control and a quality higher educational system in California that must accept all students.

Despite this admittedly grim view, Buffington said he is not a cynic.

"I tend to be too Pollyannish, even though I laugh at myself at the same time," he said.

"I'm not cynical about people generally, or the democratic process. I'm cynical and terribly worried about the state and federal governments."

But as a "Jeffersonian, lifelong Democrat" who believes that those who govern best govern least, he added, "As bad as the democratic process is, nothing has been invented that's equaled it."

Buffington still believes in education — of any kind — and that education will pull people through.

"You can't be too educated. That's like being too healthy," he said.

For his own part at Chabot, Buffington saw his strength as an administrator.

"I am proud of the institution. My talent has been in selecting good people," he said. "... If you develop a strong, competent faculty that believes in the community college, under a capable administration, you have built the institution."